

URBAN EDGE AS A RESPONSIVE URBAN SPACE

*Examination of the impact on the city with
special reference to City of Colombo*

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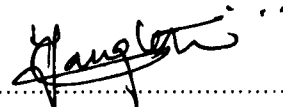
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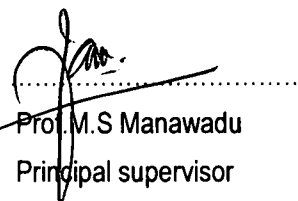
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DECLARATION

I declare that this dissertation represents my own work, except where due acknowledgement is made, and that it has not been previously included in a thesis, dissertation or report submitted to this university or to any other institution for a degree, diploma or other qualification.



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Most urban built environment in the past has spontaneously responded to social and cultural values as well as political and functional needs. Consequently they have respond to qualitative needs as well as qualitative needs of people generating authentic and unique characteristics.

However as a result of rapid development and their consequential destructions, most of the cities lost their identity and legibility and have not provided proper "architectural settings" for the urban spaces. As a result of that, generate more and more lost spaces day by day in our cities. The negative effect of this rapid development could thus be found at all places in all levels. Towns, open spaces, public buildings and other areas around the world are becoming similar, due to standardization of production methods improper use of materials and lack of concern in urban environmental design. This is directly affected to create socially unresponsive urban space in all over the city.



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The urban edges are the boundaries of the city, defining a big entity of enclosure; the city form and its spatial contents. Therefore it is an element of the city. As such defined city edges are necessary constituent of a positive image and responsiveness to the city. But that is also in a threat of lost space in an urban situation as an urban space.

Therefore need of "meaningful, socially responsive urban places and urban edges" which are capable to accommodate various urban public activities. Thus the study focused on positive transformation of negligible edges, as a responsive urban space in a city.

TOPIC EXPLANATION

The “urban edges” are the boundaries of the city, defining the big entity of enclosure, the city form and spatial contents. *“A boundary is not that at which something stops, but as the Greek recognized, the boundary is that, from which something beginnings it presenting”* Heidegger, (1974:154). The boundaries of the city and act as a figural outdoor space of the urban periphery and functioned as a public gathering place. Therefore the edges of the city play a crucial role, in order to respond positively to urban activities. Hence the edges define an urban space and become an important factor of being the emotional city image.

“Responsiveness” can be identified as a quality which has a greater potential to change this negative phenomena. Responsiveness will link human values into activities and places, so as to create meaningful social space for the built environment. Therefore re-evoke of neglected urban edges in a city is discussed further in study. And get a better understanding to implement with much sensitivity towards the social context and prevailing quality of “Urban space” in the area.



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Most development plans in the cities concentrate only on visual character and the visual form. But the nature of urban life closely relates and operated on other senses too such as an auditory, olfactory, Thermal etc. Therefore man responds to his environment through these senses. People interact with the environment; by means of “responsiveness” is a significantly character of an urban space. Therefore the “urban space” plays an important role in the life of every human being at present context. This implies to categories different uses of different urban spaces.

This study further more discusses the above facts under the title of “Urban edge as a responsive urban space” by doing an examination of the impact on the city with special reference to the city of Colombo.

OBSERVATION IDENTIFIED

The city plays the main role in the drama of lives, is not merely a concept or an abstract. It is a direct experience in live-world with full of memories and a place which we embody our feelings, images and thoughts. Therefore a city must become an utmost goal of human built environment is to offer pleasure to its inhabitants. The cohesiveness of its elements are always a dramatic events for the inhabitants that make meaningful relationship, to evoke long last memories and experiences.

It has been observed and noticed that rich public realms are under the threat in many cities in modern context. This may result to make cities move to extinction. The quality and the meaning of the spaces changes with time. And there by acquires new meanings and values. This has been a decline of public realm with is considered to be the most important social aspect of the urban context.

Urban peripheries or the edges in the modern city, is tied by rather dull and soulless elements due to several reasons. Such as pollution of inner city, traffic congestion etc. Therefore the end result is a creation of lost spaces in a city. Also it has been changing attitudes from historic aspects to functional economic aspects.

This study pays more prominence to observe and understand the "urban edges" in the light of urban responsiveness.

NEED OF THE STUDY

Present day public spaces especially urban spaces are in threat, to increasingly losing it live and its human and physical interaction. Hence social attachments to such spaces are loosing. Therefore such urban context bringing back livability to the urban forms spatially, socially and physically thus a great necessity. Even in Lynch (1960) identification the urban spaces as "distinct and unforgettable place", where as a clearly delimited place, it was most easily imaginable and represents a goal for movement.

Urban edges are vital element of the city urban space and it becomes a main determinant factor of the emotional city image that is perceived by millions of city inhabitants with long lasting memories. Therefore the development and design of the urban edges become an important area that needs to be looked in to. Hence there is a greater need of identifying the key character and responding to them and integrating the features that enclosure the image of the city.

SCOPE AND LIMITATION

The intention of this study is to examine the urban edges and its responsiveness of spaces in the urban context. Hence the study focuses on the elimination of negative effects attached to the lost edge and creating a “responsive urban space” for could also attribute to creating a meaningful social space or such spaces are or land mark, for the local towns.

This study intends to highlight the importance of the urban edge and identify the edge as an element. Also it governs on social activities and affects the behavioral patterns of the people as seen in the Sri Lankan situation context. However this has been architecturally ignored. Therefore it is important to focuses on a positive transformation of negligible edges of the city and its implicit role. Also it realizing its potential under a strategically frame work of a posses which has been driven towards the city.

The edges can be studied in many ways and analyzed according to various theories and principles. “Responsiveness” will be taken in to consideration as they are a group of principle that directly relates of the way in people experience and perceived urban space.

International examples will be used in order to explain these principles and a few local examples for the case studies. The case studies will be selected to establish these principles in the Sri Lankan context. Several situations of case studies will be mainly discussed to identify the crucial factors between the urban edges and the activity pattern of the people.

The study is limited to the city of Colombo. Because it is a city which has a historical significance with unique identity among other urban setting of the study are as follows Fort, Pettah and Beira Lake.

METHODOLOGY

The study area selected to explore urban edges, factors to lose of positive edge spaces and strategies for the positive transformation. Final aim is to identify and derive facts and issues in order to create responsive urban space. Hence the urban space and its edges should be studies and research in order to identify certain patterns spatially and socially within the urban context.

Therefore this will be in depth study analyzing of practical situations, with a theoretical base. Through out the study urban edges, lost spaces, responsive urban spaces are used to key words, which determined the basic area that should be subjected to this study.

In the first chapter, it is identified the urban edges as a spatial element of the city. It is focused definition, concepts and principles for the formation of edges. Later phase of the first chapter concentrates problems of lost spaces including urban edges and qualities and characteristics of the responsive environment.

Therefore need to be study various theories on positive urban space, with local and foreign examples. Hence the second chapter based on the frame work will highlight the achieving of transformation of urban edges to positive responsive urban space.

The third chapter is case studies will be concentrate to identified edges and its significant to the city. For that case studies focused to city of Colombo and identified lost edge spaces and potential of such edges for the positive transformation.

Methodology of case studies

Observation

Interview

Photographic documentation

Finally focuses present situation of utilized and underutilized urban edges of the city of Colombo and identified supportiveness of activities and creating implications to achieve the responsive urban space.